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GRANGER HOMESTEADS

Granger, Iowa

Official Name: Granger Homesteads

Location: In Dallas County, Iowa, 1 mile northwest of the village of Granger, and 20 miles northwest of Des Moines.

Number of Units: 50 houses with either combination chicken house and barn or chicken house and garage.

History of Project: Initiated by the Division of Subsistence Homesteads of the Department of the Interior in March 1934, the Granger Homesteads project was transferred to the Resettlement Administration, May 15, 1935. Occupants were admitted in December 1935.

Purpose of Project: The Granger Homesteads was constructed to provide 50 miners' families with modern homes at low cost, complete with large tracts of land and facilities to permit these families to raise and produce much of their food requirement, thus enabling them to raise the standards of living. Granger, located in the heart of the coal mining area in central Iowa, was chosen as the project site to demonstrate the effectiveness of the subsistence homesteads plan as adapted to the need of part-time workers. There are seven mines within 7 miles of the project and nearly all of the occupants are employed in the mining industry. The industry in this area is characterized by seasonal employment and the period of inactivity, from April to September, coincides with the growing season, thus giving project occupants an opportunity to devote much of their time to the production of the subsistence gardens.

Project Description: A tract of 224 acres of rolling, well-drained land whose soil is suitable to the production of common garden vegetables was selected as the project site. The soil varies from fine sand loam to silty clay and gravel. Possible crops include corn, grains, hay, berries, and truck garden produce. Individual wells and pressure pumps supply water. Sewage disposal is provided by individual septic tanks. Electricity is provided through the power lines of a private utility, and telephone service is available to individual subscribers. A system of county roads connects the home-sites with each other and with adjacent highways.

The Homesteaders:

The 50 homesteaders now in occupancy on the project represent the type whom the sponsors of Granger Homesteads had in mind when the project was planned. They are all normal families and there are no one-person families in residence. The husband-wife-children family predominates. The male head of each family was the chief wage earner and was gainfully employed at the time of application. There are 39 bituminous coal miners on the project together with 2 office workers employed in the mining industries. The remaining homesteaders have varied occupations. The average annual income of these families at the time of selection was \$908. In spite of the severe drought of last summer, these families were able, through the subsistence gardening, to increase their annual incomes by \$69 per household. All the selected families had had previous farming or gardening experience.

The increased income amounted to \$997 for garden and truck crops and \$2,485 for field crops.

